

HOMESWEST, TENANT INCOME REVIEW

**911. Hon BARRY HOUSE to the Minister for Housing and Works:**

- (1) Can the minister confirm that Homeswest is currently reviewing the income of its tenants?
- (2) If so, what consideration has been given to a tenant's short to medium-term income outlook, for example, impending retirement?
- (3) If so, can the minister advise what percentage of those tenants who have already been reviewed and have been advised that they are no longer eligible to remain in Homeswest accommodation are single women aged 50 years or over?
- (4) If so, can the minister set out in table form -
  - (a) the numbers of Homeswest tenants who have been advised that they must leave their homes; and
  - (b) the suburbs from which they must move?

**Hon TOM STEPHENS replied:**

I thank the member for some notice of this question.

- (1) Yes. Under the 1996 Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement entered into by the previous Government there is a commitment that all public housing authorities will review tenant eligibility with a view to ensuring that only eligible tenants remain in public housing. In line with this commitment, Homeswest has been reviewing tenants' circumstances as part of the annual inspection process. In addition, it is currently reviewing the financial circumstances of approximately 3 500 full rent paying tenants to ensure their ongoing eligibility.
- (2) As part of that review, Homeswest is giving full consideration to the tenants' current and impending circumstances. Where the tenant is income ineligible, the major consideration is the stability of the tenant's income. If the high income is permanent or ongoing the situation will be reviewed in six months and/or the tenant will be offered the opportunity to purchase. That would be so long as the tenant fulfils other eligibility criteria.

Hon Barry House: Under your reduced right-to-buy clause?

Hon TOM STEPHENS: Yes. Still with the opportunity to buy, but no longer with the opportunity to heavily discount to a level of \$20 000 as was previously on offer.

Hon Barry House: You have reduced that to \$5 000.

The PRESIDENT: Order! The minister will answer the first question, not the subsequent questions.

Hon TOM STEPHENS: In the case of a tenant who intends to retire in the short term, this would be taken into consideration and, subject to a firm commitment from the tenant, and the tenant having no other ineligibility issues, he or she would not be expected to vacate.

- (3)-(4) The data the member has requested is not yet available in the format requested. However, I am undertaking to provide this information to the member as soon as possible. I am personally working on this issue because of its complexity and its potential impact. As the member will appreciate, this is the result of a binding agreement which the previous Government entered into with the current federal Government. I am in the process of trying to hang on to a Commonwealth-State Housing Agreement to obtain funds for public housing in this State, and to be in breach of that agreement puts this State at considerable risk. I must try to find a way of complying with the agreement into which the previous Government entered, and at the same time try to find ways of responding to the legitimate needs of people in our community. I have not been left an easy task.